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ABSTRACT

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 calls for each state to develop and implement a comprehensive system of personnel development (CSPD) to train special education personnel. Support for training activities has depended heavily on federal funds. However, in 1988, the basis for allocation of federal funds to such training activities was changed from applicant need and the quality of the grant application to the state's proportionate share of the national handicapped school population. In order to formulate a rural perspective on this issue, the CSPD plans of 43 states, 4 territories, and the District of Columbia were examined for references related to improving services to rural, small, or isolated schools. Also noted were the agencies responsible for CSPD operations; any intrastate organization structure; and any reference to rural, small, or isolated school factors. Twelve plans contained no rural references. Strategies are suggested to improve the competitiveness of training grant proposals from rural, small, or isolated school districts. (SV)

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A Rural Perspective of the States' Comprehensive System of Personnel Development Plans

Despite the intent of the section of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 addressing the development and implementation of a comprehensive system of personnel development (CSPD), significant problems in inservice and preservice training of special educational instructional and suport personnel exist.

> Section 613 (a),(3) Each such plan shall . . . set forth, consistent with the purposes of this Act, a description of programs and procedures for (A) the development and implementation of a comprehensive system of personnel development which shall include the inservice training of general and special educational instructional and support personnel, detailed procedures to assure that all personnnel necessary to carry out the purposes of this Act are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained, and effective procedures for acquiring and disseminating to teachers and administrators of programs for handicapped children significant information derived from educational research, demonstration, and similar projects, and (B) adopting, where appropriate, promising educational practices and materials development through such projects (1975).

This author feels that the problems related to training special education professional personnel who will work in rural, small, or isolated school

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districts is considerably more problematical. Muse, Parsons, and Hoppe (1975) reported finding only six universities in the United States which provided courses of value for the rural educator. Sher (1978) reports that unique problems arise from the fact that a significant number of children live in rural areas and called for an end to the federal neglect of children who live in rural areas. Helge (1984) reported that rural children exhibit disabilities in proportionally larger percentages than urban children. One of the many continuing problems of rural school districts is the recruitment and retention of qualified special education professionals (Helge, 1981;Marrs, 1984; McIntosh and Parsons, 1987).

Historically, a general analysis of a state CSPD operation included the (1) assignment of responsibility to an existing or newly formed agency, (2) involvement of a broad base of input from local, regional, and statewide constituencies via appointments to boards or public hearings, (3) identification of professional personnel development needs, (4) prioritization of the identified needs, and (5) development of strategies to address those training needs. In many states the CSPD plan is filed with the Governor's Office or liaison. Funds to support training activities come from a variety of sources but usually depend heavily on federal funding plans. In most instances, only those needs which were prioritized were competitive for federal grant awards (K. Murray, personal communication, February 9, 1990).

In addition to the state CSPD procedures, those states desiring to pursue the very competitive federal grant procedures to address training activities had to pursue applications which put great emphasis on "quality of the grant application within a narrow range of funding" (Federal Register, 1990). The Secretary of Education very recently announced changing the basic method for allocation of federal funds to address preservice and inservice training needs.

> Under section 632 as amended in 1988, the Secretary is directed to make a grant of "sufficient size and scope" to each SEA for the purpose of assisting States in establishing and maintaining preservice and inservice programs to prepare personnel to meet the needs of handicapped infants, toddlers, children, and youth or supervisors of those persons, consistent with the personnel needs identified in the State's comprehensive

system of personnel development under sections 613 and 676 (b) (8).

The Secretary is changing the basic method for the allocation of these funds. In previous years, funds under this program have been awarded based on the applicant's need and on the quality of the grant application within a narrow range of funding. This method did not take into consideration the varying personnel training needs of States based on their population of students with handicaps.

The final regulations stipulate that States henceforth will be awarded funds based on their proportionate share of the national "annual child count," i.e. the count of students receiving a free appropriate public education required under Part B of the EHA and Chapter 1 of Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 as amended by Public Law 100-297. Limited additional funds will be awarded for quality of the application (quality incentive funds). IHEs may apply for grants in any State where the SEA does not apply for such grant (Federal Register, 1990)

Claus and Wittwer (1989) recognized that rural geographic areas are sparsely populated and that legislators are elected by popular vote, thus the attention-getting power of "the few" is much less than the voice of "the many" as in the "squeaky wheel" concept. Hendler and Reid (1980) identified a funding bias in favor of urban counties which exceeded 500%.

Rural Perspective of States' CSPD Plans

This author requested copies of each state's CSPD component of state plans to provide services to handicapped children and youth. Additional CSPD documents were solicited from territories, Department of Defense, and the District of Columbia. Fourty-nine documents were reviewed. This author, initially, planned to try to set up a checklist system but the documents varied so much this approach seemed impractical. I finally resorted to reading each plan and noting each instance of any reference which seemed related to improving services to rural, small, or isolated schools. Additionally, I tried to note the agency which had the

responsibility for CSPD operations in each state, any intrastate organization structure, and any reference to rural, small, or isolated school factors. I am sure that there are current favorable activities which do not appear in the documents, but I attempted to capture all that was between the "margins" of the paper/s.

State by State analyses follow:

ALABAMA

- State Advisory Committee
  - Members are appointed by State Superintendent
- Annual Committee meetings
  - Membership includes national special interest groups
- Public forums
- Toll free telephone line to register complaints, seek information, make suggestions
- Special Needs (Any notion of rural emphasis)
- Social workers assisting families to develop special activities and material for the child at home.
- Eleven (11) Regional Inservice Education Centers

ALASKA

- CSPD Committee
- Preservice training provides for a Special Education (Rural Specialist)
- Limited Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) services
- Long Distance Learning

AMERICAN SAMOA

- No IHE services except U. Hawaii
- CSPD Council
- Shortage of trained teachers to work with special needs students is one of the most critical problems in American Samoa
- Training modules prepared by U. Hawaii with Special Education Division and Special Education Training Team (SETT) with follow-up on site and Western Regional Resource Center (WRRC) Oregon
- Because of the small and rural nature of American

Samoa, INNOVATIONS are necessry
Released time for training
No cost undergraduate and graduate coursework
Adaptations of statewide materials
Locally developed materials
Attendance and participation at off-island regional meetings and conferences
Cross discipline workshops

ARIZONA

CSPD Subcommittee to the State Special Education Advisory Committee
Distinguish between Language Disability and Limited English Proficiency
SELECT institutes provided at no cost to agency/organization/group or participants
Northern Arizona University continues to expand efforts to train Native Americans to meet educational needs within their own populations.
Mini grants to support self-assessment activities.

ARKANSAS

Special Education Personnel Development Council (SEPDC) Steering Comitee (bi monthly) and Constituency Body (twice annually)
Teleconference capablity
Paraprofesional training via inservice packets and modules

COLORADO

Special Education Services Unit under the Department of Education
Each Administrative Unit will have access to the computerized data management system

CONECTICUT

Connecticut Council on Personnel Development (insures broad-based participation in developing CSPD)
Six Regions and six types of communities (small-town rural included)

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

No rural references

FLORIDA

CSPD Oversight committee

Clearinghouse Mini-Catalog of Parent Resources
films, video tapes, audio casettes

Florida Satellite Network for distance learning

Varying Exceptionalities Certification

GEORGIA

CSPD Advisory Committee

Sensitive to the total manpower needs of the state

Seventeen (17) GLRS Georgia Learning Resource System regions

Training (historically) unserved

Training modules available from South Atlantic Regional Resource Center (SARRC)

Training may be received in all areas of the state

HAWAII

Hawaii Committee for Planning and Personnel Preparation for the Handiapped

Training modules

Payment of inter-island air fare and per diem for neighbor Island participants

Flexible work time-schedule

In-Service Training Advisory Council (ITAC)

Remote transmission techniques to bridge water gap

IDAHO

No rural references

GUAM

Special Education Staff Development Advisory Committee (SE-SDAC)

No other reference

ILLINOIS

CSPD Committee
No rural references

NDIANA

Local, Regional, and State CSPDs
Seven (7) regional Indiana Council of Administrators of Special Education (ICASE) Roundtables
Eight (8) mini-instructional Materials Center for Handicapped Children and Youth in special education departments at 7 IHEs

IOWA

Iowa Cooperative Network of Information Resources loans of inservice materials
Fifteen (15) Area Education Agencies
References to the "depressed economy of rural Iowa" 21.7% decline in student population between 72-73 and 82-83
Fourteen (14) informational meeting sites and public hearings around the state
The smaller schools experienced the greatest teacher turnover in proportion to the number of teachers employed when compared to the larger school districts
Severe/Profound teachers can only complete coursework during summer because of location of the campus.
Extension courses are offered in the extreme western part of the state. "It is feast or famine."
In the western and southwestern part of the state there is a sparsity of available IHEs of either private or public nature.
They are often served by a consortium of IHEs or South Dakota IHEs.
The SEA serves as an advocate instigating review of issues which may affect a relatively few number of individuals (rural or small were not offered as examples)

KANSAS

No rural references

KENTUCKY

- CSPD Committee
- Continuum of Alternative Training System (CATS)
- Training Modules

LOUISIANA

- CSPD Committee
- SDE regional coordinators
- Personnel in Rural Areas is a priority

MAINE

- Maine's Division of Special Education and Curriculum
- Internal CSPD Committee
- Regional CSPD Committees
- Regional special education teacher support group
- Regional Teacher Academies

MARYLAND

- State Special Education Advisory Committee
- Recruitment
- Attract retired teachers back

MASSACHUSETTS

- CSPD Advisory Group
- CSPD Advisory Council
- Division of Special Education CSPD Team
- Six (6) regional CSPD technical assistance specialists
- Mini-grants
- Idiosyncratic Needs
    - Personnel who are available for rural service delivery (Berkshire Mountains, outer Cape Cod and the Islands) often require the delivery of services on a part time or intermittent basis.

MICHIGAN

- Special Education Personnel Development Advisory Committee
- No rural references

MINNESOTA

State CSPD Council
Eleven (11) Regional CSPD Regions
Indian Social Work Aide (training)
Training modules
Training participants from various disciplines to do functional community based assessment and programming for severely handicapped learners living in rural areas

MISSOURI

Missouri CSPD Council
No rural references

MONTANA

No CSPD committee
Teleconferencing
Training tools which are insensitive to distance will have a positive impact on Montana's CSPD activities

NEVADA

CSPD Subcommittee of the Special Education Advisory Commmittee
No rural references

NEW HAMPSHIRE

CSPD Personnel Planning Committee
No rural references

NEW JERSEY

Commissioners Advisory Council for the Handicapped (CACH) serves as the CSPD Council
Gloucester, Hudson, Camden, Monmouth Counties have the most severe personnel needs (Gloucester is south of Camden and Philadelphia; Hudson includes Jersey City; Camden includes Camden and east from Philadelphia; and Monmouth is upper Jersey Shore and south of NYC).
Six (6) learning resource centers

NEW YORK

Division of Program Development and the Special Education Training and Resource Center network, Fifty (50) SETRCs in the State

Needs of major cities; Buffalo, New York, Yonkers, Syracuse and Rochester are emphasized

NORTH DAKOTA

EHA-B Advisory Committee

Thirty-one (31) Special Administrative Units

Traineeships and stipends are used as incentives to recruit and encourage personnel to attend college special education training program and become qualified to work with handicapped students, particularly in the rural areas of the state

OHIO

Superintendent's Task Force for Preparing Special Education Personnel

Sixteen (16) Regional Instructional Resource Centers (IRCs)

One (1) statewide IRC

Mini-grants

OKLAHOMA

A full-time staff person within the Special Education Section of the SDE

Twenty (20) Regional education service centers

Accessible training modules

PENNSYLVANIA

Bureau of Special Education

No rural references

PUERTO RICO

SDE is responsible for CSPD

Special Education Advisory Committee

Coordination with mainland institutions

Regions, zones with supervisors and consultant teachers

Leaves of absence with pay to study

Video cassette programs distributed to regions and released by Government Television Network

RHODE ISLAND

Special Education Program Services Unit
Building specific training

SOUTH CAROLINA

CSPD Committee
Critical Needs forgiveable loans for preservice personnel who commit to work in selected counties/districts

SOUTH DAKOTA

CSPD advisory committee must be sufficiently representative so as to meet public participation requirements
CSPD Advisory Committee
A technology project focusing on distance learning

TENNESSEE

Director of Staff Development
Nine (9) development districts
Governor's Advisory Council
One district has no training programs
The attrition rate is much higher in rural areas
Two contracts with two universities to provide coursework to personnel serving in special education working on waivers. Emphasis would be to the rural areas and those LEAs in greatest need

TEXAS

The special education personnel development component of the Division of Special Education Programs
The Council for Personnel Preparation for the Handicapped in Texas (CPPH)
Regional education service centers
Research has shown that surpluses and shortages of teachers are affected dramatically by factors such as geographic isolation, . . . , growth or decline of the community, . . .and the proximity to teacher education institutions. Because of these factors , specific districts may

experience quite divergent patterns of shortages and surpluses.

UTAH

Five (5) interrelated mechanisms including CSPD Consortium
No rural references

VERMONT

Vermont Council for Personnel Development in Special Education (Training Council)
Mini-grants
Six (6) regions

VIRGIN ISLANDS

Special Education Staff Development Advisory Committee
No rural references

VIRGINIA

Personnel Development Advisory Copmmittee
No rural references

WASHINGTON

Inservice Training Planning Commmitee and Special Educational Advisory Committee
Nine (9) Educational Service Districts

WEST VIRGINIA

Office of General and Professional Education
Unique needs of regions in planning and delivering programs for personnel development
Eight (8) Regional Education Service Agencies
Exportable training modules
The West Virginia Rural Training for Speech-Language Pathologists
Part-time graduate special education programs in accessible locations for employed personnel
Support program for hearing impaired training at Western Maryland
Support program for visually impaired training at Peabody College

WISCONSIN

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Director of the Bureau for Exceptional Children
CESA Regional Service Network

WYOMING

SDE
Intermediate Education Units
Plan specifies geographical scope of service
Recognizes vast geographic distances

Recommendations

This author suggests the following plan of action to improve the competitiveness of rural, small, or isolated based professional special education personnel training grant proposals:

1. Establish a CSPD Special Interest Group as a part of the American Council of Rural Special Education (ACRES) and the National Rural and Small Schools Consortium (NRSSC).
2. Identify a contact person in each state, district, territory, or any other entity. Contacts might be efficiently recruited from ACRES, NRSSC, the National Rural Education Research Consortium Data Base (1985), or a special education personnel educator (begin with the land grant school due to the extension services potential).
3. Either from the SDE data base or from a valid state directory listing schools by buildings/campuses, solicit a determination from the LEA special education administrator that particular schools are either rural, small, and/or isolated, or not, according to criteria established by ACRES.
4. Schedule the state (or equivalent) contact person to identify a/an LEA contact person(s) in the LEA district office administering small, rural, and/or isolated schools, and/or in each of the buildings or campuses.
5. Insure that each of these LEA contact persons is informed about the current CSPD priorities and activities so that they can determine if the current activities effectively address their rural, small, and/or isolated school needs.

6. If the current activities do not effectively address their unique needs, then aid them in formulating information strategies to emphasize them in auditor site visits and/or at the required public hearings so they become a part of the CSPD record.
7. Unless these priorities are a part of the public record it is less likely that the "squeaky wheel" will be greased. The likelihood of a solution via federal funding is significantly increased in view of the Secretary of Education's change in federal fund allocation procedures.

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